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the Italian side it consisted of:

The preparation of the parachute rifle division "FOLGORO" under General STUDENT,

The readying of two more especially experienced landing divisions and their training,

The readying and training of suitable landing craft, and

The equipping of Italian air transport groups and air cover groups.

On the German side it consisted of:

The readying of a paratroop division,

The speeded completion of seaworthy small craft for transport purposes, and

The readying of the necessary air combat units and transport groups.

Combat plans were worked out so that the attack could be carried out sometime between the middle and the end of summer.

The attack-enterprise "Tobruk", which was supposed to precede the Malta attack, had such a rapid and smashing effect that Field Marshall ROHMEL requested and received against my objection permission for the continuation of the North African Campaign toward the Nile. As was to be expected, the attack was stalled before reaching the Nile and led to the setting up of the El Alamein Position. The forces which had been intended for Malta were in part used up, in part tied down by this unsuccessful offensive, so that, in view of necessary replacements and weather conditions, a new operation against this Island (Malta) was out of the question before the Spring of 1943. By that time the situation in North Africa had been basically altered, since with the advancement of the front to the Alamein Position, the supply routes were further lengthened and, in spite of the new supply line Athens - Crete - Sidi Barrani, became more and more complicated.

(Signed) KESSELRING

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ComNavForGer.....5
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